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BALDER
THE POET

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FROM

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30 Sept. 1898.

©
BALDER THE POET

AND OTHER VERSES

BY

GEORGE HERBERT STOCKBRIDGE

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY WIFE
ELIZABETH REYBURN STOCKBRIDGE

iii

This little volume is put forth neither in confidence nor in doubt, simply to be judged on its merits by those to whom it is addressed.

G. H. S.

NEW YORK, *May 1*, 1894.

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Poems of Love

1

Balder, the Poet.*

I.

Morning.

The Tide of Love.

BALDER, the poet, has likened his heart to the
ocean ;

Who has not guessed it, that Balder sings ever of
love ?

“ Love is the tide that sweeps over my heart and
upheaves it ;

Mighty, resistless, obeying unchangeable law.

* Reprinted from *Belford's Magazine*.

“What though his mistress be fickle? The tide,
never changing,
Reaches to kiss into pardon her darkening face.

“Oh, that my love, like the tide, might prevail in
his wooing !
Oh, that, like Dian, my Laura would deign to re-
lent !”

Thus sings the bard, as he likens his heart to the
ocean,
Balder, the poet, whose one only music is love.

II.

Day.

The Universality of Love.

“ **W**HETHER to love or indifference man is
begotten,

He that still doubteth was never begotten of man.

“ One I have found that reviled and becursed the
mad passion,

Lovingly warning the world to be wary of love.

“ Ten or a score I have known that were cured of
love's fever,

Praising the balm of indifference calm and serene.

“ Him I heard singing last night at Cordelia's
window ;

These rose too soon from their beds and are ailing
once more."

Thus, in an arbor reclining, bequestioned of lovers,
Balder, the poet, sings ever and ever of love.

III.

Day.

Woman.

"**T**RUST not a woman !" cries Waldemar, warm-
est of lovers,

"Nay, trust her not, though for ten sequent moons
she be true !

"Were she eternally fickle, then were she not fickle;
Constant inconstancy hardens to constance at last.

“Once I swore proudly : ‘Belinda, my life she is faithful !’

Fate now exacteth the pledge, for, despairing, I die.

“Ne’er will I trust her[^] again.” “Stay,” says
Balder, uprising,

“See where Belinda doth beckon thee ! Lo, he is gone.

“Waldemar, doubting, has faith ; being angry, is tender ;

Such sweet distraction inflame, oh, my Laura, in me !”

Now with a sigh sings the poet, and often with smiling ;

Smiling or sighing, his song is forever of love.

IV.

Evening.

Love's Tyranny.

"OH, what a dainty thing love is ! how light and
how airy !

► Tyrants that master us ever are dainty and small.

"Love may be fed upon fancies and glances and
kisses,

But in his wine-cup he mixes the red of the heart.

"Love made Avadaric weep, him, the battle-
scarred hero ;

'Look you,' he cried, 'how my Christabel's finger
doth bleed !' "

Singing forever of love unto listening lovers,
Balder, the poet, consumes the unnoticed day.

V.

Morning.

Love's Utraldom.

“RISE, oh, ye lovers ! Aurora and Laura are
nearing ;

Equal in beauty they walk and enlighten the day.

“Laura did whisper last evening a hope to her
lover ;

Mark, where she passes, the blushes that mantle her
brow.

“Oh, let me follow her ! Choose ye some worthier
minstrel !

Love is my song, yet by love I am hindered to sing.

" Poet is he that can tell all his joy and his sorrow ;
Call me not poet whom Laura hath blessed with a
kiss.

" Love that is present and strong cannot stay for
reflection ;
And by reflection past feeling is ripened to song.

" Love knows no past ; it doth dwell upon yester-
day's hand-touch ;
But 't was not yesterday ; 't was the last moment ; is
now !

" So, let me follow ! " cries Balder ; and, breaking,
he passes
Where, from his leafy concealment, the cuckoo in-
vites.

An Untimely Recollection.*

What faithless lover of them all
Is worth that Celia's tears should fall?

MERRIER dance was never yet ;
Never yet was merrier maiden ;
Laughter touched with no regret ;
Lip and eye with laughter laden.

Suddenly she left her place,
Past them all her steps betaking ;
In her palms she hid her face,—
Sobbed as if her heart were breaking.

* Reprinted from *The Poets of Maine*, by kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. Elwell, Pickard, & Company, Portland, Me.

Spake the heroes, standing near :
“ She ’s a woman, what ’s the wonder ?
Rain when all the sky is clear ;
Under blazing sun the thunder.”

Yet each pitying maiden knew,
Each on each a glance bestowing ;
O that wise men are so few !
Ah, that maids should be so knowing !

One, a stranger, whispered low :
“ Some, not all, I can discover.”
Answered one : “ A year ago
Fell this quarrel with her lover.”

The Paradox.

CUPID is king, man ;
Him do I sing, man ;
God, he, or devil,
Brings good and evil ;
Always conflicting
And contradicting.

I.

Love that is purest
Dieth the surest,
Bides the securest.
Naught so defended ;
Naught so soon ended.

Best love and truest
First thou undoest.
If thou wouldst prove it,
Nothing shall move it.

II.

Look and discover
Where the wild clover
Bears in each triad,
Trembling, a naiad.
Breathe and she flieth ;
So light love dieth.
As the dew falleth,
So soon love palleth.

III.

Long as the current
Electric is errant,

All the heart in it is
Luring affinities.
Hold the complete ring ;
Then stays the fleeting
Power, though it hideth ;
So love abideth.

IV.

Truly, love goeth
As the wind bloweth ;
Death—I have tried it—
Cannot divide it.
Mortal, to die not,
Such is love's high lot ;
Thus the more prized
What no man despised.
Deathless, still dying,
Is love's complying.

V.

Can it be shyness,
Or is it slyness,
Bids Love retreat when
Most he should meet men ?
By brazen boldness,
(Sure, 't is not coldness)
So Love outstares you,
Piques you and dares you.

VI.

Trust Love and doubt him,
Fondle him, flout him ;
He shall requite thee,
Tease, mock, and spite thee.
Scold Love and beat him,
Thwart him, defeat him ;
His meed for this is

Fond looks and kisses.
Smile, call him darling,
He shall go, snarling,
Vexed past cajoling,
Coaxing, controlling.

VII.

Ah, the sly fellow !
Sober, he 's mellow ;
Blind, none so plainly
Sees, nor so vainly.
Oh, if Love would be
Wise as Love could be,
Love should know all things,
Great things and small things.

VIII.

Alice and Harry,
Lovesick, would marry ;

Plighted forever,
Next day they sever ;
Love's cup, the token,
Shattered and broken ;
Spilt the love potion;
Palled love's devotion,
By Love's caresses,
Sighs and excesses.
No sooner parted,
Than, broken-hearted,
Harry and Alice
Would mend the crushed chalice.

IX.

No sage so wise is,
Love he despises ;

Else a dull-pated
Fool he were rated.
No fool so silly,
But, willy-nilly,
Grinning and tawdry,
He finds his Audrey.

x.

Love is a debt all
Pay with pure metal ;
Love weighs all moneys ;
Love's only coin is
Love, where no trace is
Of Lust that debases ;
Fool's gold, all glitter,
Sour wine and bitter.
Lust, the betrayer,
Flatterer and slayer,

On life it fattens,
On virtue battens.
Yet in the market,
Ugly and stark, it
Stalks with Love's banner,
Aping Love's manner ;
Lures men with smiling
And dark beguiling ;
Locks them with laughter ;
Strangles them after.

XI.

Not the world's treasure
Love's price can measure ;
One glance, where love is,
All price above is.
Unbought, love buys all ;
Takes due reprisal,

Takes, this refusing,
This other choosing.
Meeds most the holy
Gifts of the lowly,
Blessing the trustful,
Scorning the lustful.
Ah, happy mortals !
Under love's portals
Every condition
Finds just admission.
True love, I cry it,
Wealth cannot buy it,
Nor poverty deny it !

All this is true, man ;
Doubt it not, woman ;

Falser than Hell is 't,
If *half* thou tellest.
Learn all so truly
That thou may'st duly,
Without regretting,
End by forgetting.
So shalt thou live love,
And ever give love ;
And thou shalt bless hence
Love's teasing presence.

Songs

Serenade.

SLEEP, my love,
Midnight bedims the waking eye ;

Rest, my love,
Yon fleecy vapors softly lie ;
Sleep, my love.

Rest, my love,
To night and sleep thy form resign ;
Sleep, my love,
The morrow make thee doubly mine ;
Rest, my love.

Sleep and rest,
Night bears thee far with jealous pain ;
Sleep, my love,
Day bring thee nearer back again ;
Sleep and rest.

—

Song.

IN lovers' language, love doth teach
One word such multifarious speech,
No subtlest passion can elude
Its wide, unchallenged plenitude.
"For thou shalt be my love,
For thou shalt be my love."

Wide seas of travel, hand in hand,
Sweet converse on a pleasant strand,
So fond a tale, so cloying sweet,
Is told when lovers' lips repeat :
"And thou shalt be my love,
Shalt be my love, my love."

“ My love ! ” In that possession ends
The climax of love's eloquence ;
Here is declared all human, aye,
And superhuman ecstasy.
“ My love, my love, my love,
My love, my love, my love.”

The Homers.

WHITHER doth Love go,
Free to go, listing?
Where doth the dove go,
No cord resisting?
Build a fire, make a nest;
Dove shall come back to rest,
Love shall not fail as guest.

Didaskalia

Love and Duty.

LOVE had been asleep all day ;
 Came, so sweet and winning,
 Claimed his wage, but one said : " Stay !
 What's for idleness to pay ?
 Droning is but sinning."

Then came Anger, Love's rash friend,
 " Pay the boy," he shouted ;
 " He's a child ; his ways will mend ;
 And if not, why, then, God send
 He be paid, not flouted."

Here cried every soul in line,—
 Strength, Ambition, Beauty,—

All save Greed :—" Give him of mine ;
Let not Love's young heart repine ;
What knows Love of duty ?"

But the Master only said :
" 'T is an ancient ruling :
' By thy sweat thou 'lt earn thy bread ' ;
Nor hath any, quick or dead,
Shunned this arduous schooling.

" In the scheme Love hath his part ;
Should he fail, God wot, sirs,
Though it break his tender heart,
Love must, in the common mart,
Share the common lot, sirs."

Love came, sobbing, " I repent !"
Straight the Master answers :

“Love prevails ; for time ill-spent
Grief was ample argument
Since the world began, sirs.”

Then he doffed his crusty years ;
Raised the pretty fellow,—
Kissed him hotly through his tears ;
Love lay smiling,—past his fears,—
Happy heart and mellow.

A Greeting.

WHENCE come, Sir Poet? Servant thou
Of many masters, who is now
The tyrant of thy willing lyre?
Whom dost thou own to-day as lord?
Doth Love or Duty give the word?
Or Envy with his eyes of fire?

Last night a minstrel came to me;
He sang of love and chivalry
And dressed the song with jeer and laughter;
I laughed and laughed with all my might;
The *bouffe* may answer for a night,
But when the night is done,—what after?

Thy kind were wont to catch the far,
Faint gleamings of the morning star
Ere yet it shot into their ken ;
To tell in dithyrambic rage
What mighty things should crowd the page
Of history, unsuspected then.

Through arduous nights and lonely days,
They sang in love's and virtue's praise ;
Of changing faith's unchanging goal ;
By myriads heeded not nor heard,
Yet bearing the prophetic word
That still, at last, should shape the whole.

But thou their legacy of love
Hast wasted ; while they sought above
Communion with the things eternal,
Thou think'st to see true life alone

In vulgar phases cheaply known,
And either vapid or infernal.

Rise thou to know and use thy power ;
Take knowledge of the pregnant hour,
That teems with danger and with hope ;
A poet ? and thou dost not see
How much the world hath need of thee ?
How limitless thy sphere and scope ?

Look close around thee ; thou shalt see
A world that smiles,—not grins at thee ;
That still hath kept an open sense
For homely passions, simple speech,
Deep things of eloquence that reach
The soul and draw the heart-strings tense.

Strike deeper ; no dyspeptic sneer
Of what the race, forsooth, *would* hear ;

No paltry vexing of the lyre ;
Strike deeper yet ; and thou shalt find
Thy fellows will be wondrous kind,—
And ask for deeper yet and higher.

Trust them and trust thyself as well ;
No honest story ever fell
On heedless ears ; no cynic gall,
Belittling the poet's powers,
But hurt this honest world of ours,
And hurt the poet most of all.

What is the poet but a man
Who, knowing self, knows Nature's plan,
Who reads the whole, himself a part ?
The poet's dignity 'll remain ;
But keep the man's soul free from stain ;
Be only loyal to thy heart.

Poems of Sentiment and Devotion

The Noblest Sense.

A NOBLER sense than sight have I ;
Truer than eye or ear
Is that diviner faculty
Which tells me she is near.

By night, by day, I go my way,
With gentle thoughts and warm,
For that her sprite, by day, by night,
Is ever at my arm.

Each morning, when I cross to town,
She glides along with me ;
She recks not where my footsteps fare,
How long the journey be.

All day she sits, or moves, or flits,
 Whene'er I go before ;
And by my side, the long night-tide,
 She nestles as of yore.

And yet her face, oh, Mother of Grace !
 Her face I may not see ;
May not rejoice in that dear voice
 That still doth speak to me.

Once, when my lattice, wide agape,
 Let in a summer moon,
My brain o'erwrought with aching thought,
 My senses in a swoon,

I felt her fingers touch my hand ;
 But since, or morn or eve,
The clogging sense is all too dense
 Her presence to perceive.

Then rather cloud mine eyes with night ;
Mine ears with silence still ;
And swiftly let my hand forget
Its quick, responsive thrill.

But spare the silken, airy sense,
More light than gossamer ;
That spreads for me most wondrously
A midway world with her.

When the Stars and I Are at One.

WHEN the stars and I are at one,
 I envy not nor complain ;
 Careless to me is the schemer's art ;
 Order and peace are in my heart
 And rest in my brain.

That Donald should pass me by
 In the race for wealth and power,
 Donald, who carries his head so high,
 Donald, the lucky one, what care I
 At this sacred hour ?

What was it I said to-day,
 As I smarted beneath the rod ?

“Chaos, invincible, still holds sway ;
Forces Titanical flout and play
With the laws of God.

“And Fortune decides the fight,”
In the heart of my grief, I cry :
“Fortune decides, if you read aright ;
Fortune is everything ” ; yet to-night,
I know it 's a lie.

See where Aldebaran stands,
At the summit of Heaven's high wall ;
Ages and ages have hurried by ;
Races have risen to fall and die ;
He outlasts them all.

There stands he, erect, serene,
And marshals the starry hosts

Flashes his signals to every star
Sends out his couriers near and far,
To each sentry post.

All are awake, on guard ;
You may see every watchful eye ;
Never a one doth fail or fear,
Never a one but waits to hear
The commanding cry.

Vision of life and calm !
How happy if we can gain
Lessons of peace and lessons of rest,
Lessons of faith which are still the best,
When the heart hath pain.

I am borne on a limpid stream ;
I float on the equal air ;

Donald deserves all his hands have won ;

God is the Lord ! lo, the Titans run !

All the world is fair.

Order and peace and life

In those regions beyond the sun !

So doth my heart put aside its wars ;

So doth my heart have peace, when the stars

And I are at one.

A Prayer.

GOD of Love,—if such addressing
Be Thy pleasure ; or if blessing
Follow most when I implore Thee,
God of Battle, and adore Thee ;
Hear me from Thy throne above,
God of Battle, God of Love.

Just to live from day to morrow,
Take full share of toil and sorrow,
Shirk nor shrink, but bravely bear,
Cheering others, is my prayer.
Hear me from Thy throne above,
God of Battle, God of Love.

Life in fullness,—strength and beauty,
Faith and truth and love and duty,
All that 's life I pray for now ;
Is it Thou wilt help ? or Thou ?
Hear me from Thy throne above,
God of Battle, God of Love.

Reflective Poems

Conquest.

MOURN not, poet, Fame's delay ;

Vex not so thy tranquil mind ;

The world 's a little child at play ;

From his toys once lured away,

For tale or picture he 's inclined.

Some day, one that loves thee well

Soft shall pluck him by the arm,

Saying, " Here is one can tell

Tales of rose and asphodel,

Where the mink and otter dwell,

Stories fresh with living charm."

Taught to hearken, men will hear ;

Then if thy good muse stand by,

Should thy guardian god be near,

If the sacred flame appear,

The world is thine ; seize, occupy !

Success.

ROB an opportunity bought ;
 Clarence, a career ;
Which, think you, the wiser wrought ?
Who his life's fruition sought ?
 Who had found it here ?

One to get and one to keep,
 Both must labor well.
Listen, boys, the tale is deep ;
Maids, I promise you shall weep,
 Hearing what befell.

Robert failed,—O blessed chance !—
 Clarence prospered still ;

Waifs of wind and circumstance,
Spare the knowing, sidelong glance,
Spare the hopeless thrill.

Robert rose and grew apace ;
Touched the stars at last ;
Ye of weak and milky face,
Shall he hold defeat disgrace,
Now the trial's past ?

Faith.

RACE of man, from which man sprung,
Unto thee shall man break tongue.

Charms that capture trusting minds,
Holy charms in thee he finds ;

Honest censure, truest praise,
Charity and truth and grace.

To his far and secret heart,
What his friend should be thou art.

To thy mother heart he brings
All his inmost-hidden things ;

For that thou, O glorious race,
Stand'st in more than mother's place.

Of his nearest kindred, none
Is so near as all in one.

Sire is less of kin than he
Who is kin in each degree.

Any shape of any wit
In the formless All doth fit ;

Round completeness first requires
Rounded words and shaped desires.

Thus it was, O race of man,
Since the whirl of time began ;

Man hath dared in thee confide
What was hid from all beside.

What to one he would not tell,
Myriads have known it well.

Thus it was and shall be still,
Until Fate have had his will.

Secrets that at Daphne's ear
May not enter thou shalt hear ;

Hopes unuttered else and old,
Fond ambitions else untold.

Till the friends, in true surprise,
Lifting supercilious eyes,

Cry in wonder-bearing tone,
“ Is this he whom we have known ?

“ This the pleasure-loving boy,
Bubbling mirth without alloy ?

“ This the quiet man of ease,
Sighing for Hesperides ? ”

Should one answer, one would cry :
“ Not for you ; for all speak I.”

II.

Franker than with friend I 'll be,
World of all my friends, with thee.

Freely I may give offence
To thy dearest sentiments.

In the end it shall appear,
Naught is dearest ; all is dear.

What my friend with anger shook,
I may print it in my book.

All is sifted ; what remains
Is of life, and heaps its gains.

All shall hear with ready grace
What was spoken to the race.

Listener none so kind as whom
Thou provid'st for poet's doom.

Not the judgment of a day ;
What thou judgest bides alway.

If he prove him of the race,
Thou shalt lead him to his place.

Should he touch the common chord,
Thou shalt crown him king and lord.

Should his message truly be
To his sweetheart, not to thee,

She shall praise him while he sings,
Looking fond and foolish things,

Call him poet, hold him near,
Whisper nothings in his ear ;

But thy smile of small disdain
Shows him all his labor vain.

III.

Not the louder critic's word
Is at last by thee preferred ;

None less poet than thy choice
May thy judgments dare to voice.

Whoso to or for thee speaks
Not alone must know the Greeks.

Poet, preacher, bard, and seer,
Prophet, whom the gods hold dear,

Yea, and critic, must avow
Passions, judgments, broad as thou ;

Broader, if by time and space,
Weakly we define the race ;

Boundless as an endless sea,
Stretching through eternity.

IV.

Stay, then, can there be behind
One more kindred than my kind ?

All-persuasive with the art
Of knowing every human heart ?

Making men, by subtle law,
Bold, unconscious in their awe ?

Mayhap Him, the All in All,
Him my trusting spirits call.

What if He, Beginning, End,
Be the universal friend !

What if men who God deny,
Flaunting it for every eye,
Thus should give themselves the lie !

If His generous grace invite
These to do His name despite !

If to whom they curse their creed
Should be very God indeed !

Commemorative Poem

Columbus.*

THY lonely faith, thy steadfast will,
Still dauntless on the untravelled main,
What rebel doubts they wrought to still !
What fierce, wild passions to restrain !

Whether to empty, wide-mawed space
Thy ships were steered, or peopled all
With hot-breathed dragons, or a race
Of demons, naught could thee appall.

What each good mariner most abhorred,
What forms of death made mad his dreams,
All hated things, with strange accord,
Lay thwart the ocean's mystic streams.

* Reprinted, with alterations, from the *New England Magazine*, for June, 1893.

No eve but brought its goblin fright
To huddled groups by mast or sail ;
Nor any dawn that lifted quite
The close and all-concealing veil.

And yet such power was in thine eye,
And in thy voice such potent spell,
The mutinous dagger passed thee by ;
The mutinous wish unuttered fell.

The greater knowledge which is God
Was in thee—and the greater power— ;
Who knew but thou the way they trod ?
Save thee, who matched the giant hour ?

And not alone that deed sublime,
A grander victory seals thy fame ;
'Thyself wert of that age and clime,
Thine own wild heart thou needs must tame.

Heroic, all, and wisely planned,
Brave heart, strong soul, and spirit free !
For what thou didst not understand,
And what thou didst, we honor thee.

A new-born Cadmus, to a new
And greater Thebes what gavest thou ?
Life, people, letters,—heroes, too,—
All (save a name) we cherish now.

The fecund earth by thee conceived
And bore full many a lusty son,
And Time's per-eval will achieved
By bringing forth a Washington,

To be a beacon and a star
Where all a venal world may see
What bays for blameless honor are,
For perfect truth and loyalty.

Let Eric's son be set in brass
To mark a triumph idly spent ;
'T is fitting and enough ; alas !
Hadst though so just a monument !

Before thee ? Aye, before. What mole
Is witness, then, of that before ?
Ten signs upon a stain-marked scroll,
A dubious chart of sea and shore.

Where Science can but ill discern,
What shall the untutored many see ?
For him no zeal of praise shall burn,
He leads a puny rivalry.

Thy witness is this daring race,
True, valiant, loyal sons of thee,
Who share the grimness of thy face,
Thy fury of discovery.

So Franklin, with his thongs of steel,
Curbed Jove's mad charger to his hand ;
The sad-eyed Lincoln at the wheel
So steered the Ship of State to land.

'T was not to prove thy reckoning true
Thy voyage was laid ; nor less nor more
It boots thee to have thought the new,
Strange land a Western India's shore.

More glorious than thy narrow thought,
A wondrous destiny led thy way ;
To nobler ends thy course was brought,
The long, long fruitage of to-day,

When Freedom sits in Wisdom's chair,
Dispensing (not without the rod)
Vast living truths, with promise fair,
That tell the pleasant ways of God.

The past, the present, are thy praise,
And thought, outrunning laggard time,
Yields thee the radiant future days
That mock this vain and fleeting rhyme.

The days when candid Science comes
To share—no more—the people's creed ;
When better men and better homes
And better worship shall succeed.

For them that were and them that are,
Great soul, we hail and honor thee ;
Aye, and for them more blessed far,
The mighty millions yet to be.

Humorous and Dialect Poems

A Quandary.

“ I DO not know your Doctor Holmes ;
What has he published ? ” asks my friend, M. D.
“ What is his specialty ? ”
“ Ah, yes, of course, ” say I,
“ Most surely, why,
He ’s written tomes and tomes
On Snakes—and Teas—and Breakfasts,—don’t you
know ? ”
“ Oh ! ” says my friend, “ Yes, Oh !
No doubt some dietetic treatises,
With alcohol for target. These it is.”

“ Nay, that is not the kind of evils
The doctor deals with ; he prescribes

A tonic for the mind,
To cure blue devils,
With frequent diatribes
On man and womankind.”
“Humph! A mind-cure fanatic,” says M. D.
“Excuse me, if you please,
I ’ll none of him.” With that, you see,
He left me blinking ;
And now, here seated in my study at my ease,
I ’m quietly thinking.

Pray, doctor, answer me a word ;
Shakespeare and Keats, ’t is true,
Are thy familiars. Hast thou haply heard,—
Pardon the question,—of one Dr. Tait ?
Canst thou expatiate
On Dr. Lister’s antiseptics ?
Or prate of blisters and the skeptics,—

The modern crew

Who hold the modern view?

Thy honest pardon grant,

Dear doctor, for 't is so I ask it thee ;

Thy sturdy blows

For reason against cant

In followers of every " opathy "

All the world knows

(All save M. D.).

Now when, for various ills,

I take my pills

Or squills,

Or ipecac, or gall,

I know 't is thou hast made my dose so small,

Not doubting Nature will perform her share

The breaches to repair.

That thou art learned in the lore
Of thy profession
I make thee full confession.
Only, when questioned by M. D.,
I quite forgot,
In my confusions,
Thy "Homeopathy
And Like Delusions";
And recollected not
Thy "Currents" and thy "Border Lines";
Though all thy verse
My memory could rehearse
And many a tale came back by good, sure signs.

Therefore, I ask thy pardon here,
With heart sincere;
And then, too, as I write,

Thy good physicians from thy volumes rise
And chide me for despite.
Than they are scarce more wise
The great "Professor" and the "Autocrat."
Yet, for all that,
I boldly dare affirm :
Not Koch, nor Gross, nor Fritzsche,
Hitzig, nor Sims, nor Brown-Séguard,
Bacillic germ,
The itch !
Transfusion, nor old Dr. Jenner's scar,
Holds thee in thrall
Like those fair theories of good John Brown—
Thy prototype in Scottish garb—
On dogs and human fry.
Pray, in thy list of volumes medical,
Which dost thou most take down ?
Which most attracts thine eye ?

How rank'st thou " Marjorie " ?
And how dear " Rab " ?
In one word, understand,
Lie they not dogs-eared on thine *escritoire*,
While Virchow is no more
Than honored with a station near thy hand ?

Ah, scribbling doctor, mine,
What better could a bard inherit
Than thy pen's power ?
What could a healer do one half so fine
As bear thy cheerful, kindly spirit
Where Pain rules his dark hour ?

Seasonable.

SUMMER nights is warm an' slow ;

Fit fer idle sportin' ;

"Summer nights," says Jean an' Jo,

"Is wery nice ter court in."

Winter nights is fine an' keen ;

Fetch yer warmes' beddin' ;

"Winter nights," says Jo an' Jean,

"Is bootiful to wed in !"

The Fishhawk.**After. J. W. R.**

'J' EVER see a fishhawk, Jim,
Settin' lonesome on a limb,
Where the water glistens bright,
Waitin' fer a fish ter bite ?
That 's the place, when he 's ter hum,
He goes 'n' gits his dinner frum.

Sometimes, though, he flies so high
'T jest ter watch him makes ye cry ;
Sails aroun' till long 'bout noon
'S if he run a blame balloon ;
Nen he makes a sudden scoot
Like he 'd took his parachute,

Plunks into the pond, kersuz,
Like them circus fellers does.
(Never seen them chaps flop down
'Ceptin' where the 's water roun'.)
On'y he, the's this about,
Ain't the one 'at gits fished out.

Sonnets.

A Master Tragedy.**North and South.**

TWO groups of brothers, whom the villain, Greed,
Joins in a fateful crime ; till one repents,
And rises in fine ardor 'gainst the offence
But late indulged ; 't is here the plot takes seed.
For humor,—this repentance, you must know,
Is half a thrifty virtue, half a sense
Of holy zeal ; whence guilt's resentment ; whence
Fraternal strife, a monster's overthrow.

So God writes tragedy ; and he that gains
The meaning of the play, his heart is purged ;
Rewards and pains due meted, there remains

One land that for a common sin was scourged ;
And still the heedless rabble howls alway :
“ On with the play ! the play ! the play ! the play ! ”

Immortality.**I.****Agnostic.**

WHAT care we, Arethusa, what care we ?
It may be we shall die, it may be, live ;
We cannot know ; who shall the answer give ?
Not priest in stole nor sage Philosophy.
Two spheres may touch but once ; soon it shall be
Now and Hereafter meet upon the bed
Where the next fool lies dying ; but once dead,
He 'll tell not nor thou hear what he may see.

I only know the tide is at the flood
And we, at hand-touch, sail this moonlit bay ;

Enough I feel thy warm breath stir my blood ;
Enough thou knowest all my heart would say ;
If this be blossom or prophetic bud,
Dread not to-morrow ; so we love, to-day.

II.

Materialist.

IS it not beautiful, this verdant height,
The long, late afternoon, the clouds above,
The peaceful kine that through the prospect rove,
The village, and the little home in sight ?
This soft surrender, when, in will's despite,
We have no will but just to live and move
In gentle thoughts that minister to love,
When every sense is strung and tuned aright,—
Ah, sweetheart, let us drink it to the fill,
While yet 't is ours ; for soon it will be gone ;

Our Heaven to feel this holiest passion's thrill ;
Our future life the hopes it feeds upon ;
Come, then, to fonder pleasures let 's away !
We die to-morrow, but we love, to-day.

III.

Transcendentalist.

I KNEW thee, Dora, ere I saw thy face ;
Thou wert my dream-love and 't was thus I
knew
So flashlike who thou wert, and thus I grew
Thy lover in a single moment's space.
Since then how hath our knowledge grown apace
Of love and all things that are deeply true !
By knowing one strong passion, still the new
And untried remnant we have learned to trace.

So, Dora, we shall find our love the key
To future blisses that shall not decay ;
The present we may crowd full merrily
With present love that still shall last away ;
I know, of truth, but one sole end can be :
We live to-morrow, for we love, to-day.

IV.

Poet.

WHY should I quarrel with the wrangling
schools,
Which wrangle not on what I hold most true ?
That love is best, so say the poets, too,
Who feel and think and know avaint the rules.
He who is master of the poet's tools,—
Hath a pure heart, an eye of widest view,

A poised imagination, meekness, who
But he hath still sung love, the scorn of fools ?

So be it, then ; to love shall life be given,

And life with love shall warrant doubt or faith ;
But still the poet feeds his faith in Heaven,

Like that in love,—because to doubt is death ;
If love be true, our hearts may still be gay ;
We 'll live and love forever and a day.

Non Omnis Moriar.

I.

FOOL, dost thou ask if death be, then, the end?

(Since she is dead, fresh woke the thought in
thee

If, when life ends, true life hath ceased to be.)

One certain answer doth thy knowledge lend.

Dost thou not live? And then thou hast a friend,

And he another and another he ;

A score do daily habit with these three ;

On those a hundred toiling lives depend.

In the last man that treads this melting ball,

The sole survivor of a better race,

Latest and loveliest of them that were ;
In him, the strange epitome of all,
Mankind in little, shall be found large trace
And token of the gold that was in her.

II.

And is this all thy fond hope can command ?
I hear thee answer : " What is hope at last ?
What but myself projected in the vast,
My wish transfigured to a promise grand ?
Desire and hope are dual, mouth and hand,
A palsied arm between the lustful pair ;
The king boy in the cupboard, unaware
The envious nurse doth close behind him stand."

Love did not so deceive, yet when he came
How wert thou fearful what the fruit should be !

Now thou hast tasted Heaven in love's name,
Why doubt the Heaven hope doth offer thee ?
These be thy fears again. The end shall prove
Hope brings fruition no less sweet than love.

III.

We are the satellites of every sun,
By turns, into whose guiding sphere we fall ;
Stray comets, wantons, freely wooed by all,
Till straight appears the all-commanding one.
Charged with the magnetic influence thus begun,
We likewise to an ordered orbit call
Some lesser planet, subject to our thrall.
We have our day until our day is done.

But she, pure-hearted, to the primal source
Of all good influence turned and was anear ;

From Him drew love and pity fraught with force,
And sense of beauty. How her eye was clear
To see God's loveliness ! And her tongue could
tell
Its wondrous power, as none hath done so well.

IV.

Since all this beauty's loss hath grieved thee so,
Pray not for death, lest so thy friend may grieve.
What loves he that thou didst not first receive
From her who left thee with the parting snow ?
Thy homely fabric to embroider neat
With posies was her well begun intent ;
So wrought she, loosing, strengthening as she
went ;
Would she were here to make the work complete !

But thou, to live is thine, without demur,
Keep vigil with thy sorrow and arise
From that communion which it breeds with her,
Full-charged for life, and love, and sacrifice.
Be grief thy touch to make her live again
Who hath not died so long as thou remain.

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1871
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